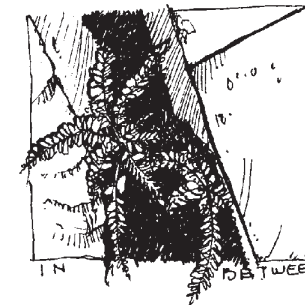
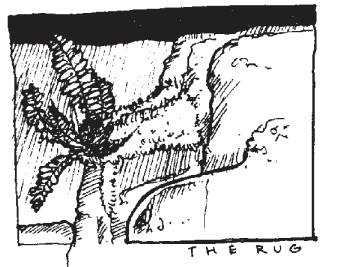
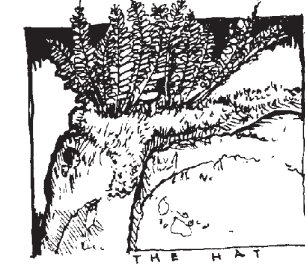


A collection....of pennies, of rocks, of bugs, butterflies, plates, stamps. Collect 'em all! In our case, as we assemble sets of small drawings in response to what we find in nature, the delight is as much in arranging as it is in acquiring. The deepest appeal of all the above collections is the pleasure we take in arranging the elements into harmonious wholes, using grids, columns or other patterns to guide their array. We repeat elements, and it's the repeat that is so aesthetically pleasing. Each drawing is unique, as each quilt block is unique, but they are all united and set off to advantage by a unifying arrangement. We organize by content and information as well, thus teaching ourselves about small but important distinctions.

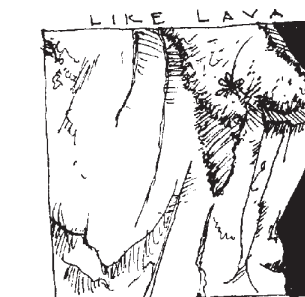
A universe of possible marks....because we're working in a tiny space in these drawings, we can give rein to the exuberance of tones and textures. In these thumbnails we can layer marks, invent textures, create distinct shades and tones, and end up with striking graphic patterns. Working on a white page, you can build rich grays and increase density for intense blacks. You can isolate bits of white here and there for sparkle and drama. You can experiment with line and shape in a way that might be intimidating on a full page.

An expertise all your own..the reason that I call these little collections "Obscure Field Guides" is that you can choose any sort of quirky subject matter to be THE expert on. Some examples of what Obscure Field Guides can cover: a field guide to grasshoppers' back legs, to insects visiting goldenrod, to things found inside rolled-up leaves....a guide to tracks and signs found in a patch of mud along the creek, guide to prickly things, to smooth things, to seed pods, to things living under the bark of dead trees, to lichen on boulders, to kinds of stones on the river bank, to textures of bark on different trees....a guide to curly leaves, guide to things in a square foot of ground....a guide to Things Water Does, a guide to raindrop patterns on the surface of water, a guide to Things Hidden Against the Background.

*an obscure field guide
ferns and moss on 2.5 billion year-old stone*



ferns and mosses seem to sit on and in the stone, sometimes like a hat or a toupe, sometimes like dirt or paint in the creases of the skin on my hand.



*LAMAR CANYON, YELLOWSTONE NP
6-30-91 cold, wet, and a complete experience.*

*Obscure Field
Guide to
Fruiting Bodies*



a grass



baneberry (?)



sweet cicely



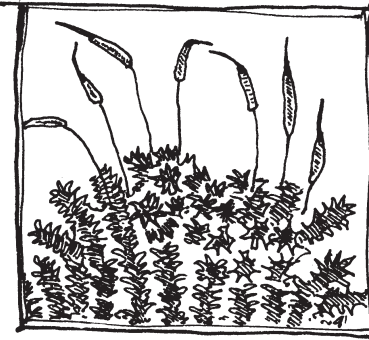
cow parsnip



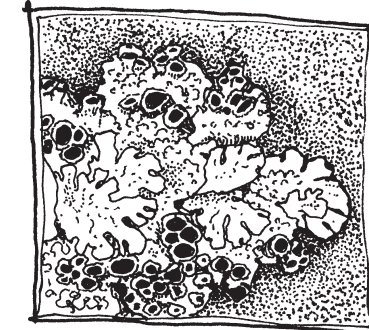
sticky geranium



*tiny fern with some-
what curled leaves*



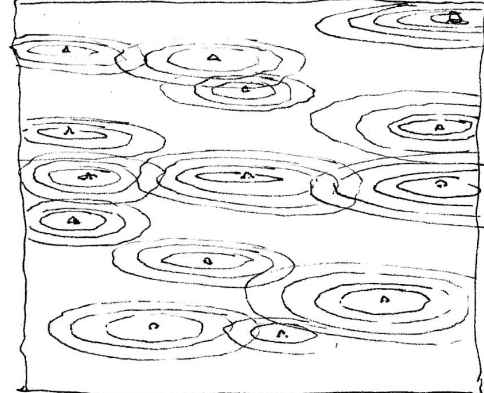
*moss with spore cap-
sules on hairlike stems*



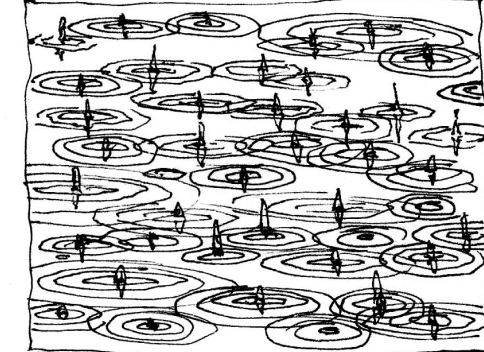
*lichen with foliose,
warty fruiting parts*

**Obscure
Field
Guide** *to things growing
right on or out of rock*

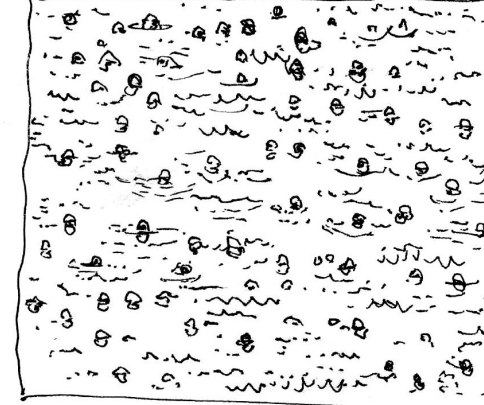
1) S P R I Z K L I N G



2) R A I N I N G

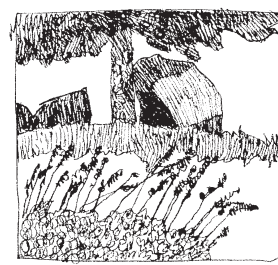
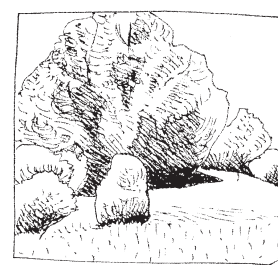


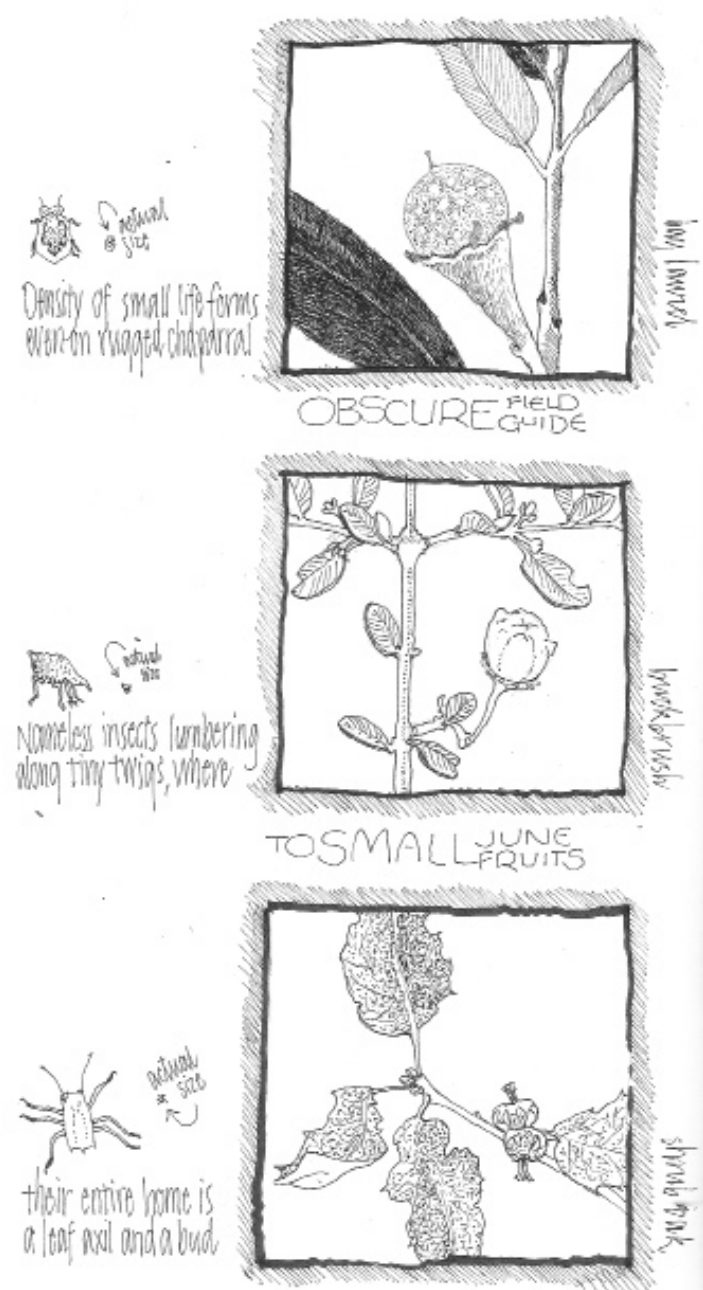
3) P O U R I N G



**OBSCURE FIELD GUIDE TO
RAIN ON
THE RIVER**

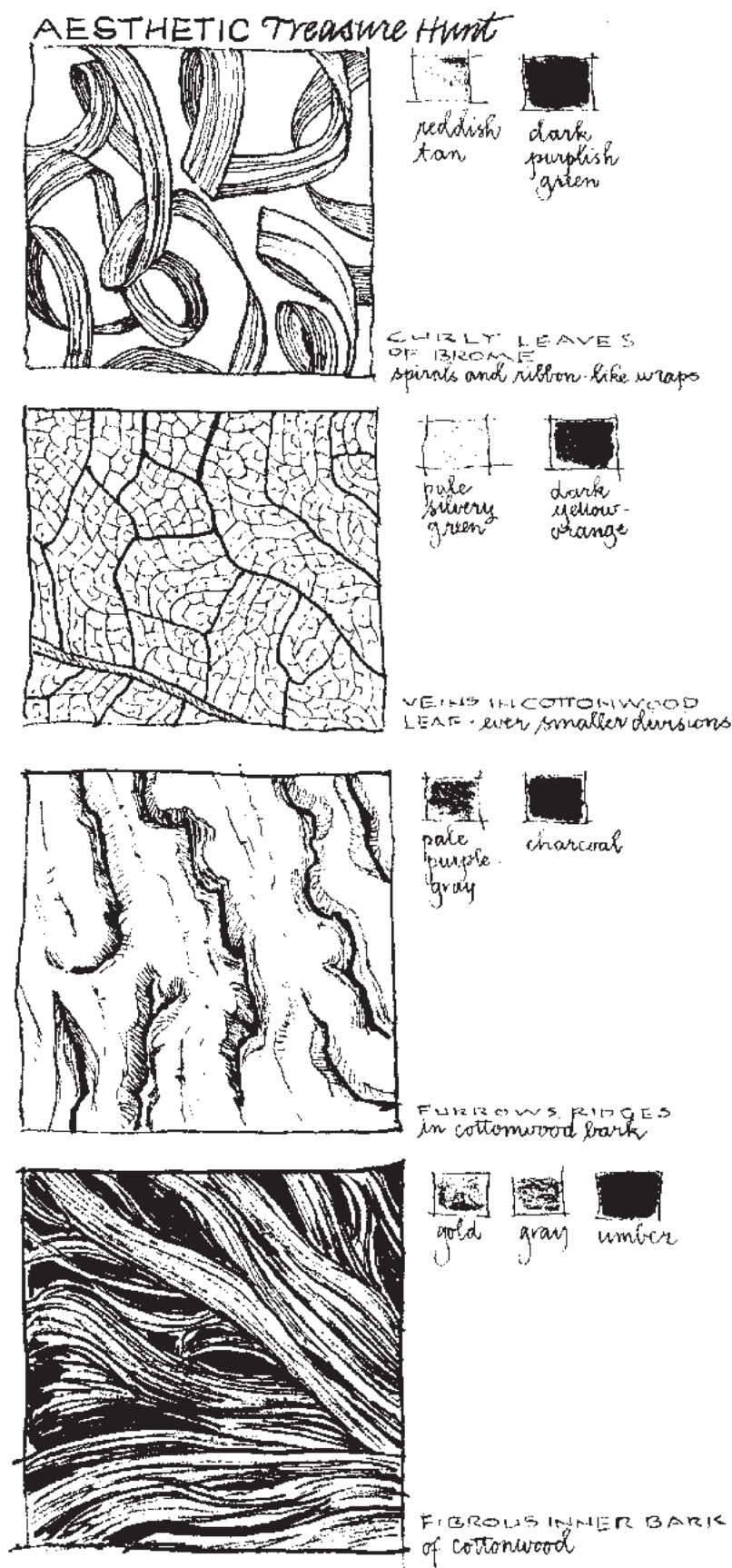
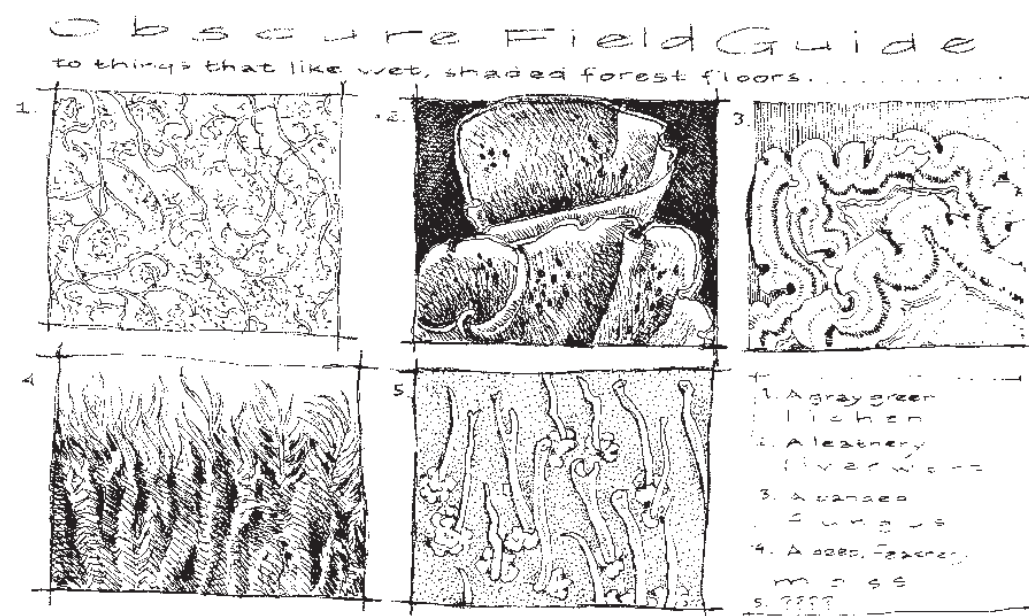
**LITTLE
VALUE
STUDIES...**
7-4





The How of It...when first you draw boundary boxes, you may think that 2 inches square is too small to do anything in, but as soon as you accept those constraints, the space will seem plenty big. You will have a chance to get very involved with textures and patterns in a way that you could not on a big page, knowing that you can bring the drawing to completion in a shorter time because it's small.

Accomplished nature illustrators have a huge "vocabulary of shapes" stored in their minds. They know, basically, what happens to the shape of a leaf when you look at it head-on. They've studied the way things curve and wrap and peel in nature, how different materials flow and change. They know the basic body plan of an insect. For a person new to drawing from nature, these thumbnails give you a way to make "studies" so that you can learn and remember a variety of shapes. For instance, a single twig of buckbrush offers a chance to learn how leaves look in different positions, and the angles at which smaller twigs join larger ones. The border drawn around your thumbnail drawing helps to orient you, gives you a definite boundary. You realize right away that you can't draw the entire branch, and so settle for a single twig - which turns out to be a world in itself.



A LITTLE SELECTION OF PATTERNS



Tracking lines



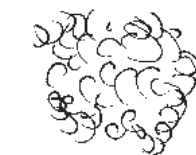
Parallel lines



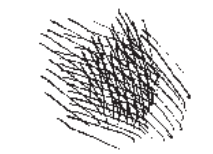
Short parallel



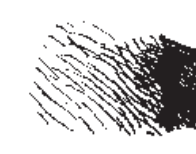
Semi-random



Repeated marks



Cross-hatching



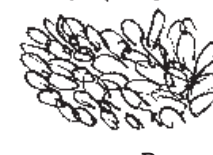
Hatching to black



Orderly stippling



Random stippling



Repeated shapes

An example of different kinds of marks that can be built up to form various tones and textures. The wider your repertoire of marks, the more inventive you can be and the less you will find that you "repeat yourself" that is, get stuck always making the same kinds of marks. If you are new to drawing, spend time adding to the variety of marks you are fluent with, that your hand knows well enough to do rhythmically.